

March 3, 2022

HB: Climate Change Education Bill

To the Education Committee,

I am writing to you today to express my support for House Bill 5285. I am a member of the Town of Trumbull's Sustainable Team and oversee our sub-group, Trumbull Sustainable Youth (TSY). Both groups are all volunteers in our town who devote time and energy to making a more sustainable community.

The formation of TSY has helped to bridge a gap for students who are highly interested in learning and participating in sustainable initiatives in our community but don't have opportunities within their schools. We have worked with various school clubs and school groups to collaborate on sustainable actions that overlap with Sustainable Trumbull and TSY initiatives. These include promoting town cleanups, holding a monthly recycling drive to recycle typically non-recycled items, legislative advocacy, social media outreach, and starting plastic film recycling programs at school.

As an active environmental advocate constantly seeking to find ways to better our community, it has been frustrating to see the lack of programs in the public schools, despite student interest in climate change topics. TSY students are frustrated, angered, and feel helpless with the blatant disregard for recycling and improper waste management strategies such as lack of recycling in their schools and the presence of Styrofoam trays. However, the number of students who possess this climate change awareness and passion is a fraction of the total student population. This marginal interest is likely due in part to the lack of academic opportunities to learn about climate change and spark student passion towards action.

Seeing from our TSY members just how engaged, productive, and passionate they can be when aware and knowledgeable of concerning issues and practices provides firsthand support for improving climate change education in our schools. Providing accurate messaging is imperative to engage our students who will be the future force for change.

Fondly,

Mari Jackson, Sustainable Trumbull